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ABSTRACT

Part of a basic training series, this booklet describes presenting a Reading Coaches (tm) session based on the simple concept of reading good books with children while engaging them in conversation about the book. The booklet notes that exemplary practices found in the SLICE-CORPS program (an AmeriCorps program) were synthesized to develop the Reading Coach model. After an introduction and a list of the core principles of the Reading Coaches program, the booklet lists elements of the Reading Coaches model, and a session plan and conversation questions for a children's book. The booklet then describes each of the Reading Coaches phases: Coaching Data (documenting the book shared during the coaching session); the comment section (providing feedback to the facilitator to improve session plans); the "before reading" phase (introducing the book and identifying target words); the "during reading" phase (building oral vocabulary, reading along strategies, and word attack skills); and the "after reading" phase (presenting conversation questions and follow-up activities). (RS)

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Presenting A Session

ED 417 392

The greatest good we can do for others is not to share our riches but to reveal theirs.

— Gil Atkinson

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Reading Coaches ™

Basic Training Series

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This training series is dedicated to

Jeanne DeVine

Whose professionalism and creativity
Provided the foundation for
Reading Coaches™, USA

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Introduction

In the fall of 1996, President Bill Clinton proposed a bold initiative to ensure that all children can read at grade level by the fourth grade. The President designated this new course of action as the **America Reads Challenge**. He cited one program in the nation as an example of what we, as a country, are capable of accomplishing. That program is the highly successful **SLICE•CORPS** in Simpson County, KY.

Between 1995 and 1997, **SLICE•CORPS** earned a national reputation as one of the most effective AmeriCorps programs in the nation. The exemplary practices found in **SLICE•CORPS** have been synthesized by SouthEast Service Academy to develop the Reading Coach™ model. The Reading Coaches™ model offers one of the most effective and highly adaptable strategies for supporting children growth as readers. Like so many good ideas, Reading Coach™ is based on a simple concept: reading good books with children while engaging them in conversation about the book.

Core Principles

1. The Reading Coaches model is based upon six core principles:

1. **Reading ability** is the single most important factor influencing school success.
2. **Early intervention** in reading provides a lasting impact on student achievement.
3. **One-on-one sessions** best meet individual student needs in the learning environment.
4. **Session intensity and duration** directly correlate with increases in student reading achievement.
5. **Ongoing Training** supports the development and success of individuals serving as Reading Coaches.
6. **Student Screening** with a valid assessment instrument establishes need, baseline scores, and a basis for evaluating improvement.

Reading Coaches™ Model

I. Teachers refer students who meet the following criteria.
   A. Have parental permission to participate.
   B. Students are believed to be at least one reading level below grade level.

II. The preference protocol for selecting students to be served is:
   A. Second Grade, (Kentucky-P2)
   B. Third Grade, (Kentucky-P3)
   C. First Grade. (Kentucky-P1)

III. Referred students are tested with the Basic Reading Inventory which was developed by Dr. Jerry L. Johns of Northern Illinois University. Students who score one or more reading levels below their grade level become eligible for the program.

IV. In consultation with the classroom teacher students are scheduled for coaching sessions.

V. Reading Coaches Facilitators begin to create session Plans to meet individual interest and learning styles of the students.

VI. Volunteers are recruited and trained as Reading Coaches.

VII. Volunteers are paired with their student and begin the coaching sessions.

VIII. Expectations of Reading Coaches:
   A. To be on site 10 to 15 minutes prior to coaching session,
   B. To review the Session Plan and to read the book prior to the session,
   C. To cooperate with Staff and other volunteers,
   D. To follow the Session Plan,
   E. To be enthusiastic in all aspects of their coaching,
   F. To offer suitable praise,
   G. To complete the comment section of the Session Plan,
   H. To phone well in advance if for any reason they will miss or be late,
   I. To follow school rules especially:
      1. Signing In and Out,
      2. Parking and,
      3. Confidentiality.
   J. Most of all, to have fun, both you and your student.

Form A001

Reading Coaches™ Session Plan

Rv 1/20/98

COACHING DATA

STUDENT Zack H. COACH Mike Houston

DATE 11-13-97 SCHOOL Simpson-Herndon FACILITATOR Mike Houston

BOOK TITLE The Giants Stew

AUTHOR Diana Noonan ILLUSTRATOR Johann Voss

BOOK LEVEL: IND (INS) R-A NUMBER OF TEXT PAGES 11

BEFORE READING

Introducing the Book

Bring a covered stew pot containing at least four(4) different vegetables that could be found in a stew. Ask Zack to guess what vegetables I have in the pot. Be prepared to provide clues to the items concealed in the stew pot.

Target Words

Find in Context

3	giant
10	carrot
9	friends
10	thought
6	children

DURING READING

Building Oral Vocabulary

Prediction Questions

3 Sprinkle 12 Vegetable Vegetarian 3 _____

5 What do you think the giant is going to put in the stew next?

10 What do you think the animals are going to do?(Ask after the giant reveals that he making "Carrot Stew"

☐

AFTER READING

Conversation Starters

Attachment or Book Folder

Follow-up Activities

Tell Zack that I had a telephone call from the giant, and he asked if Zack would create a party invitation. Have Zack draw first, and then write the information about the party.

COMMENTS

Miscalls

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

8

Numbers recorded in ☐ indicate the pages where Reading Coaches place sticky notes.

Conversation Questions

1. **Name some of the animals in the story.**
   Answer: Squirrels, Rabbits, and Bears (any two)
   Follow-up: What other animals might there have been in the forest?

2. **What kind of stew was the giant making?**
   Answer: Carrot Stew
   Follow-up: Name some other spices the giant could have added to his stew.

3. **Tell me what the giant said when he set down to eat his stew.**
   Answer: "I wish I had friends; I could share my carrot stew with them."
   Follow-up: Why do you think he said that?

4. **Why do you think the animals were concerned about what the kind of stew the giant was making?**
   Answer: They didn't want to get eaten.
   Follow-up: What do you think about hunting animals?

5. **Do you ever help cook? If yes,tell me about that.**
   Answer: Any logical answer.
   Follow-up: Tell me other ways you help .

Depending on the book - the number of conversation questions could be as few as five or as many as 10. Remember these questions are intended to spark a conversation. They should never be viewed by you or your student as a "test."

Reading Coaches™ Phases

The Session Plan is divided into five distinct sections with each serving a unique function (See form A001). Those five parts are as follows:

1. Coaching Data
2. Before Reading
3. During Reading
4. After Reading
5. Comments

The function of these sections will be discussed in greater detail during training. It is important to remember that although the sections have different functions, they must flow together to create a seamless connection from the beginning to the end of the session. The means by which a Reading Coach™ creates such a session is through the use of directed conversation with the student.

This dialogue between coaches and students produces an exchange of information. The students share with their coaches their learning styles, interests, and views of the world. The coaches share with their students their love of literature and bring new significance to the event of reading.

Reading Coaches™ must look for and celebrate incremental changes in student accomplishment. Their ears, eyes, and hearts must be open and receptive. They must be willing to change the world one word at a time.

> **The bottom line is this: You write in order to change the world, knowing perfectly well that you probably can't.... In some way, your aspirations and concern for a single man in fact do begin to change the world. The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way a person or people look at reality, then you can change it.**
>
> **James Baldwin**

Coaching Data

PURPOSE: To document the book shared during the Coaching Session and provide beneficial information to the Reading Coach™ presenting the Session Plan.

The top of the Session Plan provides a great deal of information:

STUDENT - The Reading Coach™ Facilitator prints the first initial and last name of the student.

COACH - The name of the person who presents the Session Plan.

DATE - The date the session is conducted.

SCHOOL - The name of the school.

FACILITATOR - The Reading Coach™ Facilitator who prepares the Session Plan.

BOOK TITLE -The title of the book.

AUTHOR - The first and last name of the author.

ILLUSTRATOR - The first and last name of the illustrator.

BOOK LEVEL - The category of the book selected is circled: **IND INS R-A**

- IND (Independent) - means the student knows 99% of the words in the book.
- INS (Instructional) - means the student knows 90% of the words in the book.
- R-A (Read-Along) - means the student knows less than 90% of the words in the book.

* Note: *Most sessions center on a book that can be finished during that session.*

NUMBER OF TEXT PAGES - The number of "Text Pages," not counting the title page or pages that contain illustrations only.

The BOOK LEVEL indicated in the Coaching Data section is a key factor in determining the manner in which the book will be shared with the student in the DURING READING phase of the session. The Reading Coach must recognize the level of the selected book and be prepared to use appropriate strategies.

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Comment Section

PURPOSE: To provide feedback to the Reading Coach™ Facilitator in order to improve Session Plans for the students.

In this section, the Reading Coach™ records what the student did and what the student said. Write only about what was observed.
Some of the specifics you must record are:

Miscalled Words

The Reading Coach™ should note words that the student miscalled. Focus on words that surprised the Reading Coach™ that the student did not call correctly: in The Giant's Stew video, Mike noted that Zack miscalled **SAT**. *Record no more than five words.*

Specific Comments

1. **Themes** or **Areas of Interest** to the student: Zack definitely expressed a great deal of interest in birthday parties and skating. Be alert for things which are significant to the student.
2. **Likes** and **Dislikes** of the student: Record powerful statements made by the student regarding preference in the subject area (e.g., he likes dinosaurs; does not like sports stories.)
3. **Record any information you believe would be helpful in planning a better session for the student.**
4. On Fridays, the Reading Coach™ Facilitator reviews the comments written during the week. Reflecting upon this information, the Reading Coach™ Facilitator gains valuable new knowledge. With this new knowledge, the Reading Coach™ Facilitator can make better selections of books and activities to support the student as a learner and to foster a love of literature.

Provide information that will help create a better Session Plan

Before Reading Phase

Introducing the Book

PURPOSE: To create excitement and interest in the literature.

This is a short but exciting introduction to the book. By generating excitement, Reading Coach™ invites the student "into the book." The introduction should not exceed two minutes. The Reading Coach™ Facilitator creates the introduction by incorporating three major components:

1. **The Five Senses**
   The Reading Coach™ Facilitator selects an activity based on one of the five senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste, or touch) as the foundation for the introduction.
2. **Mystery/Imagination/Drama**
   Use mystery to peak the interest and imagination of the student. The best Reading Coaches™ are dramatic and generate high energy.
3. **Use of a Prop**
   Use a prop to heighten the interest of the student. The Reading Coach™ can always put an object in a bag to have the student make guesses. Clues can be given to help the student be successful.

Target Words

PURPOSE: To increase the words the students knows by sight.

Sight vocabulary words are pre-selected words to emphasize before the Reading Coach™ shares the book with the student. The words are selected because of their high frequency in the story. The Reading Coach™ prints these words on the white board before the student arrives. After the introduction, the Reading Coach™:

1. Reviews the Target Words with the student using the white board.
2. Help the student find the words in context. (Sticky notes are used by Reading Coach™

During Reading Phase

Building Oral Vocabulary

PURPOSE: To increase the student's oral vocabulary through the introduction of new vocabulary in the literature or suggested by the literature. The acquisition of reading vocabulary is directly related to the acquisition of oral vocabulary.

Two or three "beautiful language" words are selected by the Reading Coach™ Facilitator to share with the student during the reading of the story. These words are not words to be reviewed before reading; rather they are to be discovered during the reading of the book. When the word is encountered in the text, the Reading Coach™ treats the discovery as a "teachable moment." The Reading Coach™ and the student talk about the word in a natural way. The word's meaning and its use in the text are discussed. The student should be engaged in a dialogue that allows for the exchange of information.

It is important to mark in advance the page on which the word appears with a sticky note to remind the Reading Coach™ to talk about the word with the student. Students will eventually even anticipate these sticky notes as coaching sessions continue.

Prediction Questions

PURPOSE: To keep the student actively involved in the reading of the book and to provide an opportunity for the student to use his/her imagination.

Reading Coach™ Facilitators will select two or three places in the text as "points of entry" for the student to become actively engaged. These invitations are offered by asking open-ended prediction questions. The questions can be about "what is going to happen next" in the text or an examination of a picture and "wondering" what is going on. In either case, the student is encouraged to offer an opinion or point of view. Remember, a student can never be wrong when we ask for an opinion.

The Reading Coach™ Facilitator should mark the page with a sticky note to locate where the prediction question should be asked. Students become conscious of these notes and often will tell the Reading Coach™ that "you are supposed to ask me a question."

Read Along Strategies

PURPOSE: To provide appropriate support for a student when he/she recognizes less than 90% of the words in a book.

The following three "Read Along Strategies" are used to support the child as he/she reads books above the instructional level. It is imperative to always model appropriate reading techniques. Record below some of the effective reading practices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

ECHO READING In Echo Reading, the Reading Coach™ reads a short phrase from the text and the student "echoes" those words back to the Reading Coach™. The coach selects a phrase of a length that is within the child's ability and has meaning.

DUET READING In Duet Reading, the Reading Coach™ and student read the text together like singing a "duet." There is a tendency to become monotone while doing this type of reading. The Reading Coach™ should continue to model effective reading practices such as inflection and tone.

STOP & GO READING The Reading Coach™ tells the student a game will be played. The student gets to start first and begins reading. The Reading Coach™ says,"Whenever you want to stop, you can. Then it will be my turn, so I must pay attention. When I am reading, you must do the same, because when I stop it will be your turn to go."

Independent Strategies

by Jill Marie Warner

When I get stuck on a word in a book
There are lots of things to do
I can do them all, please, by myself;
I don't need help from you.

I can look at the picture to get a hint,
Or think what the story's about.
I can "get my mouth ready" to say the first letter,
A kind of "sounding out."
I can chop the word into smaller parts,
Like on and ing and ly,
Or find smaller words in compound words
Like raincoat and bumblebee.
I can think of a word that makes sense in that place,
Guess or say "blank" and read on
Until the sentence has reached its end,
Then go back and try these on:
"Does it make sense?"
"Can we say it that way?"
"Does it look right to me?"
Chances are the right word will pop out like the sun
In my own mind, can't you see?

If I've thought of and tried out most of these things
And I still do not know what to do,
Then I may turn around and ask
For some help to get me through.

The Reading Teacher, Vol. 46, No. 8 May 1993

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Beyond "Sound it out"

Purpose: To provide appropriate assistance to the student when he/she encounters an unknown word during Instructional Level reading.

To help children **monitor their own reading** and **cross check:**

- (Allow sufficient wait time)
- Try that again.
- Were you right? You said.....is that right?
- Why did you stop? What did you notice?
- I like-the way you tried to work that out.
- Check to see if what you said looks right, sounds right, and makes sense.
- It could be... but look at...
- Is it.... or.... How can we check?
- Point to each letter with your finger. Did that match? Did you run out?
- There was a tricky part on that page. Can you find it?
- You point and I'll read it like you did. Were you right? Could that be?

To help children use **meaning:**

- Look at the picture to help yourself.
- You said....Does that make sense?
- Try that again and think what would make sense.
- What would you think it could be?
- Make a good guess and go on.

To help children use **language structure:**

- You said..Does that sound right?
- Does that fit here?
- Can we say it that way?
- Does that sound like the way we talk? What would you think it could be?
- Try that again and think what would sound right.

To help children use **visual** information:

- Does that look right to you?
- What could you try?
- How did you know it was.....?
- Look at how the word begins.
- Do you know another word that starts (ends) that way?
- Get your mouth ready for the first sound.
- Can you say more of the word? Let the word tumble out.
- Do you know another word that looks like this? (use word families)
- Do you see a small chunk of the word that you know?
- If that was....what would you expect to see at the beginning? At the end? In the middle?

To help children **problem solve** independently:

- What can you do to help yourself?
- I like the way you tried to work that out.
- What can you try?
- Good readers keep trying...nice job.
- Good readers....(provide explicit praise).

(Adapted from work of Marie Clay)

Strategy Example

The following strategies help the student attack unknown words. These strategies can be modified by the Reading Coach™ to meet the needs of the student. The Reading Coach™ should avoid spending too much time on any word: 15 to 20 seconds should be the maximum.

1. **Have the student focus on the word.**

   Using your finger, point at the word to ensure the student is focused. If the word has appeared before in the story, refresh the student's memory by asking "Have we seen this word before?"

2. **Have the student make a prediction based upon one of the following:**

   (a) the beginning letter(s) of the word,

   "Look at the word. What word would make sense that begins with that letter?""

   (b) the illustrations, or

   "Look at the picture. Can we say it that way ?"

   (c) the other words in context.

   "Look at the words around the word you don't know. Can we say it that way?"

3. **Offer one of these hints.**

   (a) Give an informal definition (a hint)

   It means to be "between" - for the word "middle"

   (b) Give a rhyming word .

   It sounds like "bake" - for the word "take".

4. **Tell the child the word - THE LAST RESORT.**

NO MORE THAN 15 TO 20 SECONDS ON ANY WORD!

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After Reading Phase

Conversation Questions

PURPOSE: To explore with the student through conversation, at least five areas characterized by: 1) retelling the story, 2) recalling details, 3) making inferences, 4) making evaluations, and 5) demonstrating word knowledge.

The conversation continues after the reading of the book by engaging the student in a discussion about the book. This is one of, if not the most, critical parts of the session. It takes the greatest planning and must never be perceived as a test by the student. It is, and must always remain, a conversation. The conversation questions are provided to the Reading Coach™ in a book folder or an attachment to the Session Plan.

The questions used to guide the conversation should include facts, details, or explicit information that is important to understanding the setting, characters, story problem, or resolution. Also included are questions that help the student reason beyond the text by making inferences, drawing conclusion, and evaluating characters, events, or outcomes. Such questions encourage students to use the information from the text along with their background knowledge to arrive at and justify or explain a response.

Follow-Up Activities

PURPOSE: To connect writing and reading in a meaningful manner.

All activities are written by the student in his/her Opus. This procedure preserves the students work and provides a source of material for inclusion in the student's portfolio. The activities selected are "achievable" in the time allotted and reinforce creative thinking. The Reading Coach™ is encouraged to continue his/her conversation with the student and to offer advice and encouragement as the student writes. Spelling is not corrected during this process. If the student asks for help in spelling a word, the Reading Coach™ may tell the student to "spell it the best you can," or write the word for the student on the white board. **Never spell a word for a student orally.**

At the end of the session, the Reading Coach™ has the student record his/her Target Word in the student's Word Bank list in the back of his/her Opus. It is imperative that the words be spelled correctly and be recorded by the student.

To be effective, all you need to do is follow the plan and be enthusiastic!

It's not rocket science. All you have to do is keep it simple. Just get one well planned and enthusiastic coach to share a book with a child. Our responsibility is to provide training and support to those who coach.

— Mike Houston
Director, SLICE/KY-READS

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